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MARCH

VOL.
40

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Weekly Journal

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CHARLES DICKENS

PART 220.

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1887.

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Nos.
953-956

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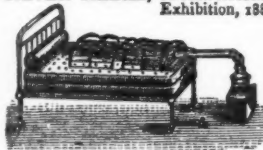
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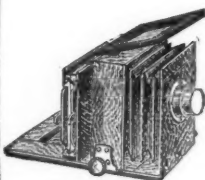
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No. 953. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, MARCH 5, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE

GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dame Durden," "My Lord Conceil,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER IV.

"WHO ART THOU THAT JUDGEST?"

A HORRIBLE doubt was gnawing and tugging at the strings of Adrian Lyle's uneasy conscience. As a rule, when he doubted anyone or anything, he went straight to the point and solved the matter by direct investigation. Yet now, for the first time in his life, he hesitated. He would not put the question he wished, because he feared the answer.

"She is such a child," he would say to himself again and again; "why, a baby could deceive her, and what does she know of forms and ceremonies? Only I wish—I wish I dared ask how and where she first met Kenyon! I could master her by a word or look. I should hear the whole innocent story from her own innocent lips; but I have grown a coward, I think, for I dare not. Better the evil one suspects than the evil one knows. Now by what odd chance was she thrown across my path? Just that my restless, suspicious mind should invent all sorts of theories and histories about her. I might not have been so suspicious had it not been for that servant. He is a rascal if ever there was one. . . . I wonder if Neale Kenyon suspects that the fellow writes to his uncle, Sir Roy. It is an odd affair altogether. Four days—four days! I wish with all my heart I had never heard that expression from Bari. Four days! and she is so innocent and unsuspecting. But there must be a mistake. It was a hurried marriage, no doubt; but still it is a marriage.

Why, the greatest villain on earth would not have the heart to deceive that child; and Kenyon is a gentleman, though somewhat weak and yielding of nature; the sort of man to shuffle with temptation, not to resist it."

Then he threw away the end of his cigar, and walked away from the terrace where he had been watching the gondolas.

"I do not think this place agrees with me," he said to himself. "I am getting hipped, melancholy, out of sorts. I shall go on to Rome."

As he disappeared up the marble staircase, the gondola containing Kenyon and Gretchen came up to the landing-place.

The girl put her hand to her eyes as if to shield them from the dazzling light. She was still in a half dream; too happy and too engrossed even to note the absence of that grave and courteous cavalier who, of late, had been always at hand to welcome or speed her, remove her wraps, or render her any of those little services or attentions which come so naturally from some men to some women.

But Adrian Lyle, as he saw her, turned and met her in the vestibule.

"Have you enjoyed it?" he said; and there was ill-repressed curiosity in his voice and eyes.

"Oh, more than I can say," the girl answered eagerly. "But do you know, Mr. Lyle, when we had left the crowd and got away from the Grand Canal altogether, we heard the most exquisite singing you can imagine. I have heard nothing like it in the churches or anywhere. I wish so much I knew who it was! I shall never forget the voice as long as I live."

"You will doubtless hear many better in course of time," Adrian Lyle answered carelessly. "Italy abounds in beautiful voices."

"I think," she said solemnly, "there could be no other like that in the world."

They moved up the staircase together. Bari had detained Kenyon a moment.

"Pardon, Monsieur," he said in a low voice as he took up the wraps and cushions, "but some visitors have arrived at the hotel this evening, of whom I have heard Sir Roy speak. Their name is Graham."

Kenyon started as if he had been shot.

"Good Heavens!" he cried, "what a horrible nuisance! Of course, it would never do to meet them. Get everything ready to start to-morrow morning, Bari. We will go on to Rome."

"Yes, Monsieur, and you will explain to—Madame?"

"Of course, of course; and do, like a good fellow, get us off without meeting those people. It would never do—never!"

"Monsieur may trust to me. Breakfast shall be served in Monsieur's apartment, and the gondola will be in waiting directly afterwards. The train starts at nine in the morning."

"The earlier the better," said Kenyon.

"Bring me up some soda and brandy to my room, Bari, and don't mention my name in the hearing of these people, if you value your place."

"Monsieur shall be obeyed."

There was the usual bustle and confusion going on at the railway station. Porters and commissionnaires were rushing about; hotel dignitaries were conducting departing visitors to their carriages, and doing, or superintending, all ticket-taking, luggage-labelling, and other arrangements on their behalf.

Gretchen and Kenyon were comfortably settled in their carriage. The former was gazing out of the window at the hurrying crowd, and laughing at the general confusion. Suddenly she gave a little cry and leant forwards.

"Mr. Lyle—oh, Mr. Lyle, are you going too? Do come in here. There is plenty of room!"

She had opened the carriage door in an instant, and Kenyon, leaning forward, saw the tall, familiar figure standing on the platform.

"My dear fellow, do come in," he cried. "Who would have thought of seeing you? I left a note at the hotel telling you we were off, and excusing ourselves for not taking formal leave."

Adrian Lyle was beside them now, his foot on the high step, his face a little paler

and graver than its wont, looking back at Gretchen's lovely, excited eyes. A passing official bade him hurry—the train was just off. In another second he had swung himself up and into the carriage, and was tossing his portmanteau and rugs in various directions.

"It is odd, meeting you like this," he said, with a little hard laugh. "I only made up my mind to quit Venice last night, and I, too, left a note of farewell for you."

"And why are you leaving?" asked Gretchen eagerly. "Neale keeps saying it doesn't agree with him—it is damp and chilly, and that he will bring me back a few weeks later, when the weather is warm. I was so sorry to come away. And did you think it did not agree with you, Mr. Lyle?"

"Yes," said Adrian Lyle slowly, and not meeting the frank, sweet eyes. "I began to find it—did not—agree with me."

"Well, I hope you are going to Rome also," said Gretchen gaily, "for I am sure you are better than any guide-book, and you can explain all about the wonders of the Eternal City to me. I am so dreadfully ignorant. I thought I should find it just as I learnt in the history; but Neale laughs and says the Palatine is a ruin; and so is the Colosseum; and the Forum is only a few broken arches; and Rome is all dust and dirt, except where the new English quarter has sprung up. Octavia would not know it were she to come back to it, and it would break great Cæsar's heart. Is that true?"

"Yes," said Adrian Lyle, "it is quite true. Time does not stand still, you know, and Rome is the mother of the world. But I have yet to see her as she is. I can only tell you travellers' tales about her. The Rome of your history and your fancy is separated by two thousand years of war, and siege, and famine, and pestilence, from the Rome you will see."

"Now we are off," said Kenyon, as the train glided out of the great damp station, and shot out over the gleaming water, all rosy and golden with the morning light.

Gretchen looked longingly back at the city.

"Good-bye, Venice," she murmured. "Beautiful, wonderful Venice! I wonder if I shall ever see you again?"

"Of course you will, child," said Kenyon, a little pettishly. "I have told you we shall come back. Why, we haven't seen

half of it yet. There is the Lido, and the Murano, and the Armenian Convent—the place where Byron stayed, you know—and—and—oh, heaps of places!”

“What made you leave so suddenly?” asked Adrian Lyle, fixing his calm, grey eyes on the young man’s face.

Kenyon looked slightly confused. “Well, as Gretchen says, it was so confoundingly damp and chilly. It is too early in the year for Venice. Rome will be just right.”

“Are you going straight through, or do you rest at Florence?”

“We shall stay there to-night if we are tired,” said Kenyon. “I know it very well. I don’t care to go over the old ground again. With the exception of the Duomo and the two galleries, one might as well be in an English town now—English dresses, English horses, English carriages, English faces. That’s what Florence is. The Cascine is a regular Hyde Park; so is Lung’ Arno, with its strings of carriages, and riders, and promenaders. The only places I liked about Florence were Tivoli and Vallombrosa, and they are both a long way out of it.”

“Well, we will not stop there,” said Gretchen gaily. “I know nothing of it at all, it was not in my history. I am content to go on to Rome. Are you, Mr. Lyle?”

She included him so innocently and naturally as their companion, that he felt it would have been almost churlish to refuse her. He shook off his gravity with an effort. He declared himself perfectly content to abide by their plans, and wondered with a little ironical wonder, why Fate had so chosen to overthrow his own.

Having once thrown off his gravity, he seemed his usual natural self. His former ease of manner returned—only he rarely addressed himself to Gretchen, though he listened to her lightest words with the most courteous attention. His feelings were well under control, and no one looking at him, or listening to him, would have suspected what a dissatisfied, irritated spirit was wrestling within him for the mastery: was filling his mind once more with confusion of doubt, and forcing the simplest word or most innocent expression into one dark channel of disbelief.

“There is something wrong,” that tormenting voice told him. “There is something wrong—try as you may to doubt.” “There is nothing wrong,” his masterful nature would indignantly reply. “There can be nothing wrong. I won’t believe it.”

And Gretchen’s guileless eyes would look at him, and her sweet lips smile; and that hateful, cruel doubt would be crushed fiercely, remorsefully down, for the look smote him as might the look in a child’s eyes, who frankly gives trust and knows not that betrayal is at hand. Besides—as he told himself again and again—there was no doubt but that the two were passionately in love with each other, and Kenyon—if he was a little weak and easy-going—was certainly not vicious. To be irresolute and yielding was very different from being downright wicked. The young man had good points—very good points. He was, to all appearances, rich, free, and independent. Why, then, should that first trivial suspicion which a chance word had fired, persistently charge itself with added doubts and increasing uneasiness?

“My dear fellow!” broke in Kenyon’s voice at this juncture, “are you composing a sermon, that you look so grave? I have spoken to you three times, and you have not answered me once.”

“I—I beg your pardon,” stammered Adrian Lyle. “I had lost myself in a maze of fancies for a moment. I really did not know you were speaking to me.”

“What were the fancies?” asked Gretchen, turning to him. “Tell me; I should so like to hear them.”

He looked at her, and a faint tinge of colour came into his pale, grave face.

“I was only thinking,” he said gently, “how few of us—if any—have really strength to master a great temptation.”

“Temptation, it seems to me, is nothing but a combination of circumstances which we have never sought to bring about, and certainly can’t avoid,” said Kenyon gloomily. “There are forces too strong for a man. He yields simply because he can’t help it, and then he is accused of not resisting what he feels is wrong.”

“There are forces that some call too strong for them to resist,” said Adrian Lyle quietly. “I have thought—it may be I am wrong—but I have thought that it was simply because they never made the effort.”

“They may make the effort and Fate will overthrow it,” said Kenyon.

“Ah,” said Adrian Lyle with that odd, puzzling smile that sometimes lighted up his face. “I forgot—Fate!”

For he remembered now why he had resolved to leave Venice, and how the resolution had been as useless as the effort to execute it.

He remembered, and he said to himself, "Who art thou who judgest another? Take heed that thou thyself may not fall!"

CHAPTER V.

TWO SIDES TO A QUESTION.

KENYON had said that night, "we will stay at Florence on our way back," and to Gretchen his lightest wish was law. The next morning, therefore, they were once more speeding along towards Rome, and again was Adrian Lyle their companion.

Kenyon complained somewhat of his eyes, and Gretchen had insisted upon bandaging them from the light, and the young fellow was lying lazily back on the seat amidst rugs and cushions, and telling Gretchen that he trusted to her for a full and particular description of the scenery as they sped along.

She was in the gayest of spirits. The previous day had been damp and rainy; but now, as they left Florence, the sun was shining brilliantly, and the cool, rich air seemed to make the girl's pulses throb, and her whole frame glow, and bring such light and glory to her face as made her indeed a "joy to look at."

"I believe Florence is beautiful, after all," she said, straining her eyes to catch sight of the yellow water, and the white villas and villages that are scattered among the shadows of the mountains as thick as summer lilies.

"Say rather its environs," murmured Kenyon lazily; "'tis a case of the enchantment of distance, my child."

"I think you are somewhat disposed to rob the city of her just dues," interposed Adrian Lyle. "If you could see her now you would be inclined to change your opinion——"

"That the Arno is yellow and muddy, instead of silvery clear; that the streets are, to say the least of it, malodorous; that it has rained for a fortnight with a steady downright persistence that would put England to shame; that the most enthusiastic of travellers' tales are responsible for many erroneous impressions; that 'Firenze la bella' is a very Anglicised modern edition of

Where, white and wide,
Washed by the morning's water-gold,
Florence lay on the mountain side."

"Oh, hush—heretic!" laughed Adrian Lyle. "We will not have any of your modern cynicisms to-day. It is a pity you

cannot see the 'morning's water-gold' for yourself. But at least you can feel the air. Is it not delicious?"

"And the hills are like silver with the olives," cried Gretchen rapturously; "and the Arno looks like molten gold; and the plains are so fresh and green that it makes one thankful for the rain you abuse. Is he not ungrateful, Mr. Lyle?"

"Perhaps he does it for a purpose," smiled her companion. "To draw out your own enthusiasm, Mrs. Kenyon."

For a moment Gretchen looked at him as if bewildered; then grew rosy red.

"I—I beg your pardon," she said, laughing; "but it did seem to me so funny to be called—that. I forgot for a moment that I had a new name; it seems scarcely possible that a fortnight ago I was—only Gretchen."

A sudden cloud came over the brightness of her face. Kenyon moved uneasily on his seat.

"My dear, things are changed since then, remember."

"You were sorry, no doubt, to leave your parents?" said Adrian Lyle gently.

"She had none to leave," interposed Kenyon with sudden sharpness. "My wife is an orphan. So much the better for me," he went on in English, "I shall not be worried with a mother-in-law."

Adrian Lyle looked at him in some surprise. He had noticed before that any allusion to his marriage was sure to provoke a sharp or irritable rejoinder.

"On dangerous ground again," said the old suspicions, rising and facing him now, as they had risen and faced him many times before, in silent hours of night, in solitary hours of day. "He is so frank in all else; why not here?"

"There may be an advantage for you in such a case," he said at last, answering Kenyon's remark in his own language. "But I feel sorry always for the man or woman who is motherless; and your wife is so very young."

He said that as an afterthought, looking at the young child-face that was regarding them both, feeling with all the force and fervour of an honest and most tender nature, that there was something strange and pathetic about this lonely young life, given so early and unconsciously to trials and chances of which she knew nothing, with only a young man's rash, hot-headed, impulsive love on which to rest for guidance, for happiness, for her whole life's weal or woe.

"I begin—a little to understand," said Gretchen in her pretty, broken English. "You must talk not secrets before me now. And, indeed, I am not so young," she went on, lapsing into German; "and Neale is to me all and everything; and if I have been lonely and cried for the love of those who are for ever dead and lost, I cried no more when once I found what love was left. And he came just like a fairy prince, and took me into this beautiful new world, and we shall remain there always now—for ever, and ever, and ever!"

"Let us hope so," said Adrian Lyle heartily. "It is not everyone in this world who is fortunate enough to find a fairy prince, or—princess."

Her frank, sweet words had charmed away the demon of suspicion once more.

"I am a grave and sedate person," he went on presently, "and I lost my rose-coloured spectacles long ago—lost them in a fight with the sin, and shame, and suffering that are so constantly about my path. But I have replaced them by glasses of neutral tint which, if not so pretty, are at any rate more useful. Ah," he broke off suddenly, "how beautiful those mountains look in this light! Do you know that a poet once called that Apennine range the 'borderland of Paradise;' it is a pretty fancy, is it not?"

"Yes," said Gretchen dreamily; "it must be a beautiful life, a poet's. To draw one's thoughts from God, and make His works immortal just by a line—a few simple words—that all the world will hear of and remember!"

"Beautiful, yes, but a sad life too," said Adrian Lyle; "for there are many deaf ears in the world, and more who forget than remember. And many a poet has poured out the gold of his soul at thankless ears, and sung his songs to the jeers and derision of an age who could not understand him. Indeed, to be a poet in the true sense of the word, is to be something very different to the rhyming machine, whose watch-cry is 'popularity;' is indeed to suffer for and with humanity with tenfold sympathy. To ask for bread and receive stones—to look on the children of the world as the Master looked at Jerusalem, lamenting even as He lamented, 'Ye would not.'"

"I remember," said Gretchen timidly, "that the priest in my Church used to warn me against believing what he called 'poet's fables.' Goethe and Heine, and even your great Shakespeare are to me

only names. Neale has told me about Dante, and Byron, and Shelley; one cannot but hear of them here in this land. And are all the beautiful things they wrote fables? It seems to me there must be truth in them—a great deal of truth—if fanciful in its expression."

"Yes," said Adrian Lyle quietly, "there is truth—truth learnt in suffering, immortalised by pain. The outcry of struggling souls, the laments of tortured hearts, the struggle to interpret for others the visions that seem inspired of Heaven, the dreams of deathless love, the anguish of defiant sin: these are truths, however clad; the truths of one common humanity speaking to individual hearts in one common language of joy or sorrow—of hope or pain."

"Are all the priests of your Church like you?" suddenly asked Gretchen.

The blood flushed warm and bright to that grand calm brow of Adrian Lyle.

"No," he said curtly, and then smiled as if some sudden thought amused him.

"A priest is but a man, you know, and men are fallible and unstable creatures. The mere fact of being consecrated to the Church's service does not turn one into a pure and sinless being, any more than the sacredness of our calling places us above the needs of the flesh. I think there are more erroneous impressions abroad respecting what is called 'priesthood,' than about any other calling or profession. For myself I frankly tell you I am considered too liberal-minded and eccentric to be in favour with my colleagues. To be a follower of Christ is to my mind a very different thing to following men's doctrines and dogmas. The Rector of my own parish is one of those halting and two-faced dignitaries who have done so much harm for religion, with the very best intention of glorifying the Church. He is in fact a Ritualistic parson of advanced Roman Catholic ideas. Now I am no stickler for one form of religion as superior to another; but I say the simpler the better, and the less the 'man' is dragged in and the Deity left out, the more nearly do we approach the standard of Christ's own teaching. To march about in scarlet trappings one day, and violet another, and white another, is no way of glorifying the Creator. To set more importance upon these outward symbols than on the service itself—as I have known many a Ritualist priest do—is, to my mind, both foolish and sinful. In your Church these are essential parts of the ritual. In fact, I very much doubt if the

Roman Catholics would consider religion as religion, without ceremonious processions, banners, candles, robes, and censers, flowers and images, and decorations of all sorts. But with us it is different, is it not, Kenyon? Do you agree with me that this 'halting between two opinions' is a cowardly thing at best, and is slowly sapping the life-springs of all that was best and truest in religion?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, I have never given the matter much thought," said Kenyon languidly. "I rather like High Church services myself. Music and flowers, and vestments, and all that sort of thing. It's really more lively, you know, when you come to think of it, and I never can see why you parsons should want to make religion out as a gloomy sort of thing. The other way draws best, depend upon it."

"True," said Adrian Lyle sarcastically. "It brings more people to the services, and more contributions to the offertories. Fashion does for religion nowadays what martyrdom did of old. Gloomy! Who talks of religion being gloomy? It should be with men and about them as are the air and the sunshine. It should make our bright days brighter, our sad ones less mournful. It should shed the glow of its gentle charity about and around our lives. Gloomy!—why, the earth is but one shroud of sin and sorrow over all the dead and futile hopes of life; the sun that disperses that gloom, that revives those hopes, that bids us raise our weary heads, and cheers our fainting spirits, is religion. Gloomy! Am I gloomy? Can I not enjoy life, art, nature, companionship, and affection? If I preach to others, Heaven knows it is in all humility, and only perhaps out of comprehension of their needs, and gratitude that I can so comprehend them. But think you I would adopt clerical cant, or clerical voice, or affect the virtue of superiority, knowing that I too have needs to satisfy, sins to repent of, faults to fight against, weaknesses to avoid, temptations——?"

He stopped abruptly. He saw that Gretchen's eager eyes were gazing at him with a rapt and wondering delight.

"Forgive me," he said, with a forced laugh, "I really am taking my office upon me and beginning to preach."

"I think you are one of the few parsons who could preach a sermon worth listening to," said Kenyon, with an indulgent smile.

"And I," said Gretchen in a strange, little, fluttered voice, "I wish, Mr. Lyle,

that if what you have said is your religion, you would teach it to me."

"My child," he said, very softly, as his luminous eyes turned gravely to her face, "religion is scarcely a thing to be taught. Love is its soul and spirit; love for what is freely given—the love of a Heavenly Father watching over us, caring for us, guarding us. When we once realise that, all else is easy. Every heart has its own form of worship, and brings its own offerings. It wants not teaching or instruction. It knows that He who created can also comprehend, and it fears not to pour out its weakness, its longings, its faults and failings, to the ear of Infinite Mercy."

"An ideal worship," murmured Kenyon, "the offspring of enthusiasm—not of reason."

But Gretchen's eyes grew dark and humid. "A beautiful worship," she said, "and a beautiful faith. I wish it were mine."

CHRONICLES OF SCOTTISH COUNTIES.

INVERNESS.

LIKE the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the parish of Stepney over the wide ocean, was the supremacy of the Sheriff of Inverness over the north of Scotland in the olden time. He might carry the King's writ, if he could, as far as John o' Groat's and over the seas to the further Hebrides. The little burgh of Inverness was, in fact, the only foothold the King of Scotland had in all the wild country north and west of the Grampians till the thirteenth century, when Elgin, Nairn, and Cromarty were formed into separate shrievalties. Argyle, Sutherland, and Caithness, had no Sheriffs of their own until 1633; and Ross, that ancient province and Earldom, took its laws from Inverness for nearly thirty years more. And Inverness-shire, which in origin was only an administrative group of Highland districts and clans, is still the largest of the Scottish counties; larger, indeed, than any county in Britain except Yorkshire, and, with its islands and eyots among the fierce Atlantic surges, stretches some hundred and fifty miles from point to point.

At the very end of this wide, wild region—as far from the centre of its jurisdiction as could well be imagined—lies Inverness, the capital of the Highlands.

The rightful queen and sovereign of this land
Of Bens and Glens and valiant men.

Here is a bright and pleasant modern town, with nothing to remind us of Macbeth's Castle, unless it be the Clach na Cudin—the Palladium of Inverness—a stone which is built into a modern drinking-fountain, and which, no doubt, witnessed the meeting of Duncan and Macbeth. Close by, a wooded height, known as Craig Plin-drick, is crowned by the remains of a curious vitrified fort, which some have surmised to be Macbeth's Castle. But this was probably an antiquity even in those dim days, and why should we go further afield than the Castle Hill, which, although now occupied by a modern Court-house, seems exactly to realise Shakespeare's description?—

This castle hath a pleasant seat; the air
Nimble and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.

And yet, while there is nothing distinctively Gaelic about the town itself, there are times when its Highland aspect asserts itself: at the meeting of the Gaelic Society, for instance, when the streets are crowded with stout fellows in kilt and philibeg. This meeting is timed to coincide with the great annual wool and sheep fair on the second Thursday in July, when there is such a gathering on the eve of the fair from all parts of Scotland; such greetings, and hand-shakings, and slaps on the shoulder, that would dislocate frames less firmly knit; such a hurly-burly of Borderers, Lowlanders, and Highlanders, that surely nothing like it is to be seen anywhere else in these degenerate days. And yet, say the old hands, it is nothing now—a mere Quakers' meeting, or Teetotal field-day, to what it was in the old times.

But in the old times, if there was a grand scurry once or twice a year, things were quiet enough between whiles. The shops were small and insignificant in appearance; the inns were poor; the streets were dirty. When the rulers of the town bestirred themselves and determined to march with the times, there was never a man to be found who would condescend to be appointed scavenger. Was that fit work for a Macintosh or a Macpherson? Alas! there is little of the old pride left. They were homely enough, too, in apparel, those proud burghers: broad bonnets, rough, homespun, huge plaids, were the only wear; and the bailie who first wore a hat (a beaver cock, no doubt), was the wonder and admiration of the town. "Well, I am but a man after all," the bailie would deprecatingly remark.

It was about this time that young Major Wolfe was in garrison here with Kinsley's Regiment, afterwards the Twentieth, and used to attend the academy of Mr. Barber, teacher of mathematics. With his thirst for knowledge and anxiety to master every science that might bear upon his loved profession, Major Wolfe was an example to the pleasure-seeking officers of his own and later times; and when, as General, he fell in the arms of victory on those glorious heights of Abraham, be sure the worthy schoolmaster, while he wept over his fate, was proud to boast that he had taught the master science to the victor of Quebec.

Fort George was then quite new, and itself a study, having been designed after the latest models of Continental fortification. It lies on a narrow spit of land, a low, sandy peninsula jutting out into the Firth, and no doubt commands the entrance to the river and port. But it is difficult to see how the fort could bridle the clans, who were never given to naval enterprise: it was well adapted, and probably designed to cut off the Highlands from possible sympathisers in France.

Nearer Inverness lies the dismal Moor of Culloden, a name that still sounds unkindly in the ear of the Gael. When Prince Charles, after driving General Hawley and his dragoons in rout from the field of Falkirk, was advised to break up the siege of Stirling Castle and retreat to the Highlands, his brave army retreated in three divisions. One took the direct but rough and dangerous Highland track-way over the Grampians, and along the upper waters of the Spey—the track which the Highland Railway now follows in its winding progress to the coast; the second division pursued its way through the braes of Angus, and across the straths of Moray to Elgin, and there it was joined by the third corps, which had marched along the coast; and the whole army re-united at Inverness, where the Prince was well received by the loyal little burgh, whose sympathies were entirely given to the Jacobite party.

The Duke of Cumberland, hastening northwards with reinforcements, gathered and reorganised the broken forces of General Hawley, and pushed on from Stirling by the only practicable route for Southern troops—the long detour, that is, by the Lowlands along the coast. An English fleet followed the movements of the army, and kept it abundantly supplied with provisions. In spite of its superiority

in number and equipment, the morale of the English army was by no means high. The onslaught of the Highlanders had proved irresistible on many occasions; their army, though in retreat, had never been beaten; the dim and distant mountains hung like a cloud over the spirits of the Southern troops. Had there been a leader like Montrose to handle the Highland levies, the campaign might have had a widely different result.

But divided and doubtful councils were prevalent among the Highland host. There was discord among the chieftains—there were heart-burnings that even the presence of the enemy could not assuage. On the fourteenth of April, 1746, the Hanoverian army reached Nairn, some twelve miles from Inverness; and, well informed of its movements, Prince Charles and Lord George Murray determined on a night attack and surprise. But in the pitchy darkness of the night, and owing to the weariness of men but poorly fed and ill-supplied, the long march miscarried. Morning found the Highlanders scattered and disordered, still four miles distant from the English camp. Then they fell back wearied and dispirited to Culloden Moor.

Cumberland advanced, and, finding the Highlanders extended on his front, prepared for battle. The Duke had thought out the problem of the Highland rush for himself; he determined to receive it as cavalry is received, in regimental squares with a serried hedge of bayonets. And thus he drew up his army in three lines, with cannon between the squares. The tactics were primitive and simple, but they sufficed.

At the last moment the chances of the Highlanders were destroyed by a point of honour. The Macdonalds claimed the post of honour on the right of the line. It had been theirs ever since Bannockburn, and should they surrender their post to the men of Athol, those miserable Camerons and Stewarts? These last were quite ready to fall upon the Macdonalds, before attacking the Sassenach. Alas for the Gael! here was the fatal rift that runs through all their history, that can be traced even before history begins. Thus the battle began, the cannon opened fire, men began to fall fast. A general advance was ordered; the pipers blew their loudest; the men of Athol rushed forward, broke the first line of the English, and took the guns opposed to them. But where were the Macdonalds?

Immoveable on the left, they sullenly received reiterated orders to fall on. "Let somebody else fight, if the Macdonalds were not to be the first." In vain their chiefs commanded and implored. "Have the children of my tribe forsaken me?" cried Macdonald of Keppoch, as he fell under the enemy's fire, in anguish more bitter than that of death.

By this time the Prince's right attack had spent itself and recoiled, pursued by a destructive fire. The English cavalry advancing threatened the line of retreat, and, judging the battle to be lost, those about the Prince persuaded him to fly. Then the repulse became a rout, and the butchery began which has stained with an indelible disgrace the name of the victor of Culloden. Not only were the fugitives slain without mercy, but the wounded were knocked on the head like so many disabled cattle; and this, not in the heat of combat, but in the days that followed the battle. A number of the wounded had huddled into a barn, and the barn was set on fire as the easiest way of getting rid of them, while strings of helpless captives were fusilladed without mercy.

The Firth of Inverness, with Culloden on its shores and Fort George mounting guard over its entrance, winds farther inland in a land-locked basin known as Beuley Loch, surrounded by a flat and fertile country, whose luxuriant fields of grain offer a strong contrast to the surrounding regions of mountain and moor. This is the pleasant Valley of Beuley, which derives its name—a strange and foreign name for the Highlands—from the little ruined Priory of Beuley, founded in the thirteenth century by Sir John Bisset of Lovat, the descendant of a Norman line, who invited seven French monks from the Abbey of Vallis Caulium to take possession of the home he had built for them. The French monks, agreeably surprised by the aspect of this pleasant valley in the wilderness, gave it the name of Beaulieu.

To the Bissets succeeded the Frasers, originally a Border family, who, in process of time, by increase and adoption assumed the proportions of a powerful clan, although always looked upon with more or less suspicion and dislike by their pure-blooded Gaelic neighbours. The chief of the Frasers, Lord Lovat, still occupies Castle Beaufort in Beuley Valley, the present modern building being, it is said, the thirteenth castle built upon the site. The lands of Clan Fraser stretched

up the Beuley river and among the glens of its tributary streams, and many a hard battle was fought by the clan to guard their soil and gain a trifle from their neighbours. A memorable battle with the Mackintoshes—a clan numerous enough to have eaten the Frasers, had the former not been weakened by internal dissensions—is commemorated by two up-standing stones on the road to Dingwall, two miles north-east of Beuley.

Another battle fought by the Frasers in the sixteenth century is not without interest in its relation to the respective status of clan and chief. The clan Ronald Macdonald occupied Glengarry, and most of the country westward even as far as the Sound of Sleat. Their former chief had married a Fraser, and the son Ronald, who succeeded, on his father's death, to the headship of the tribe, was regarded with jealousy by his clan, as being as much a Fraser as a Macdonald. The Frasers, it has already been said, had an evil reputation among the clans. Their chiefs were credited with crooked and uncannie ways, and a grasping and covetous hankering after their neighbours' lands. Anyhow, Clan Ronald would have none of the Frasers, and deposed their chief, and put his cousin, John Macdonald, in command, and in possession of the lands that, according to tribal law, belonged to the office. The deposed chief appealed to his kinsmen, the Frasers, and the matter was represented to the King as a Highland outrage to be repressed by the strong hand. George Gordon of Huntly was entrusted with the mission to carry fire and sword among the rebellious clansmen, and he was accompanied by a strong force of the Frasers zealous for the enforcement of the law. Gordon, however, was no friend to the Frasers, and had no mind to pull their chestnuts out of the fire. He executed his commission in a friendly way, accommodated matters as to the chieftainship, and brought about a general reconciliation. The Frasers departed on their way home along the great glen when, skirting Loch Lochy on the western side, they saw the Ronalds coming down the hill. There were nearly five hundred of them, in seven companies, marshalled after the admirable traditional tactics of the Highlanders, and the Frasers only mustered three hundred; but the latter at once threw themselves into order of battle, the chief, Lord Lovat, in the centre; his eldest son, the Master of Lovat, taking command of the right, and the

cadet of the house of the left wing of the clan. Then began a fight of heroes—foot to foot, target to target, broadswords ringing on the tough bull's hide, or crashing through a foeman's naked breast. First the eldest son of the Frasers fell, the Master of Lovat; then the old chief himself bit the dust. The descendants of either clan may tell with pride that when the battle ended from sheer exhaustion of the combatants, only four Frasers and ten Ronalds remained alive upon the field.

The great feature of Inverness-shire is indeed the very Glen Mohr or Great Glen, where Frasers and Macdonalds battled so strongly, and through which, in these times, swarms of tourists pass on every summer day in Mr. Macbrayne's excellently equipped steamers. The Glen is a natural cutting; a rent rather, as if torn by some great hand right across Scotland, in its wildest and most mountainous regions. A string of lochs occupies the floor of the Glen, hedged in by great walls of mountains, leaving at places hardly room for a goat-path to wind between. Down to these lochs flow streams and rivers from either hand, sometimes in leaps and bounds, as at Foyers,

Dim, seen through rising mists and ceaseless showers,

sometimes curving through lovely glens, as at Urquhart, where a noble, old, ruined castle mounts guard over the meeting of the waters. Between Loch Oich and Loch Lochy is the natural water-parting. There the waters flow to the Atlantic, and here to the German Ocean; but the floor of the Great Glen is nowhere raised more than a hundred feet above the sea-level. Nature designed the Great Glen, no doubt, reasoned the military advisers of the English Government, to be a bridle upon the wild Highlanders, and with a strong fort at either end of the glen, and a place of arms half-way through, all connected with roads cut out of the mountain side, the Highlanders were indifferently well bridled from the days of the glorious Revolution.

Early in the present century, when canals were favourite enterprises, was commenced the Caledonian Canal, which unites the string of lochs, and forms a water-way between the two seas. It is a work for which lazy or busy travellers may be thankful; for here in all ease and comfort you are carried through some of the wildest and grandest scenes in the Highlands. But the tall ships and argosies

of trading craft, that were expected to make use of it, have never come that way. The works cost over a million, and the traffic almost pays the cost of management and repair. Passenger steamers run to and fro, and an occasional cargo boat, and sometimes a stray brig or schooner may be seen loading or unloading timber or bricks. The herring boats sometimes pass through from the west coast to the east coast fishing, and as many as five hundred of these craft have been seen in one long procession passing over the canal. The sea-gulls follow the passenger steamers from sea to sea, and grow sleek upon the scraps that the cook flings overboard, which sometimes the corbie from the mountain glen will dispute with the sea-going strangers.

Half-way through the glen, in a pleasant green nook, stands Fort Augustus, built in 1716, after the first Jacobite rising, and enlarged by General Wade in 1730; no doubt in anticipation of the next one; when it received its name in honour of William Augustus, the future hero of Culloden. The Jacobites mastered the fort in 1746 after a siege of a couple of days; and, in the same year, William Augustus himself formed his camp about the dismantled fort as a convenient place for doing military execution on the Highlands. The fort was garrisoned till the first year of the Crimean war, by which time the Highlanders had ceased to be formidable to the Government of the day, and the site was sold to the Lord Lovat of the period, whose son gave it to the English Benedictines; and there, among the Highland solitudes, has been reared a Gothic pile, which, when completed, will rival, in dignity and importance, the finest of the old Benedictine Abbeys. But there is a little bit left of the old fort with its grassy mounds, and the sight of Benedictine monks in their dark robes, pacing, breviary in hand, the green glacis of the old fort, calls up curious mingled associations, and a kind of mild wonder at the course of Time and its revenges.

Where the floor of the glen sinks at last into the sea-lochs, which seem to carry on the great rift even into the bed of the Atlantic, Ben Nevis himself mounts guard, his great bulk looming over the bright, green plain below. And there, in the middle of the green plain, in almost savage isolation, is the great feudal Castle of Inverlochy, with its round towers and quaint curtain walls. This was one of the strongholds of the Campbells, and into the green plain, all unexpectedly, out of the dark

defiles of Glen Nevis came Montrose with his Highland army, to beat down his great enemy, Argyle, in the very centre of his power. Argyle, even before the fight, took refuge in one of his galleys in the loch; his courage was of the enduring and not of the pugnacious order, and thence he witnessed the defeat of his clan and the slaughter of his kinsmen.

This green plain, too—a heavenly green in the light of the setting sun with the mountain glowering above, his summit wrapped in thunderous clouds that still assume a thousand rainbow hues—this green plain is the traditional seat of a great city; a kind of Carthage among the Western seas; a city rich and powerful, and the resort of Princes with golden torques; of sages and enchanters full of mystic lore; of bards and of musicians who made the streets vocal with song, and with the strains of the harp. It was the great city of the Gael in the time of his greatness. Here was the royal seat of Achaius, who treated with Charlemagne as an equal. There is no trace of such a city now; nothing but vague tradition to show that it ever existed, and yet somehow we feel that it did exist there, under the gloomy guardianship of Ben Nevis.

A very small substitute for the vanished city is Fort William, the last link in the Highland curb-chain. The fort is one of the oldest of the series, having been built by General Monk originally, and restored by William the Third, after whom it is called. Fort William stood a siege from the Jacobites in 1715 and 1745, and was garrisoned even as lately as 1864, when the last soldier marched out.

People are carried so comfortably along the Great Glen; they see such throngs of tourists; so many people who minister to the wants of tourists have established themselves on the route; that they scarcely realise the desertion and desolation of the Highlands. From the Great Glen to Cape Wrath you might strike a bee-line over the hills, and see no house and meet no living soul. And yet within the memory of men not yet very old, every little glen was populous; regiments of hardy soldiers might have been "lifted," where now is all a dreary solitude, lonely, sad, and unpeopled; where grouse and blackcock nest among the cold hearthstones of deserted hamlets, and the sheep browse on the green patches that mark the abandoned clearings of the banished race.

It is curious, too, to note how scant was

the sympathy of contemporaries for the evicted clansmen. "Of late years," wrote a popular author of fifty years ago, "the landlords have very properly done all they could to substitute a population of sheep for the innumerable hordes of human beings who formerly vegetated upon a soil that seemed barren of anything else."

But among the sorrowful stories that now and then come to light touching the exodus of the Gael from the lands which, however barren, he loved with all the intensity of his nature, there is one pleasant story, with a better ending, which may be found among the Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness. It is an affair of the Chisholms, whose lands were in Strathfarrar and Strathglass, just above the country of the Frasers.

When Mary, the daughter of the chief, was a young lassie in her teens, four South-countrymen came to see The Chisholm, and passed the night with him at Comar. In the course of the evening it transpired that the Southrons wanted the best of Strathglass for sheep-walks. Mary listened for awhile in silence, but with burning cheeks. At last she started up, unable to contain herself, and cried that "it should never be." Mary was ordered off to bed; but, instead, she found her way to the kitchen, and, while the servants, all Chisholms, gathered about her, wondering and pitying her grief, for the tears were streaming down her cheeks, she related in broken voice the evil that impended over the clan.

Never was fiery cross sent round with more rapidity than this unwelcome news through Strathglass. By morning dawn, on the following day, about a thousand men, old and young, were gathered before Comar House. They demanded that their chief should come out to them. The Chisholm was aroused, and came forward to remonstrate with the clansmen. They would frighten his guests. There was a loud roar of mocking rejoinder. Frighten them! "What," asked the old Gaelic spokesman of the tribe, "what were those men better than the freebooters who came, sword in hand, to drive them from their lands, and whom their forefathers had smitten in the days of old?" "What indeed!" shouted a thousand tongues.

The guests themselves were listening at the windows, amused at first; and then, alarmed at the threatening aspect of affairs, they stole away to the stables, and, without leave-taking or farewell, rode off helter-skelter at full gallop, followed by

wild shouts of laughter and cries of derision. This happy ending of the matter turned the thoughts of all with affection to their old chief. He was carried on the shoulders of his children through the glen, the pipers strutting before them all. It was the happiest day ever known in Strathglass. And it is pleasant to find that the little daughter of the chief lived a long and happy life, and was always the true friend of her clansmen.

But we must not forget that Inverness-shire has a considerable dominion among the isles, although these deserve, and, perhaps, may receive, a chapter to themselves with the other outlying islands. Skye, however, seems more naturally a part of Inverness, divided as it is from the mainland by a narrow sound, which a Danish Princess once blocked by a chain, so that she might levy toll on all who passed her castle. And Skye is the land of the Macleods and Macdonalds; the former being of Scandinavian origin. The fiery flag of Dunvegan, on which it is said the existence of the house depends, is perhaps a relic of the Crusades. Anyhow, the old castle of Dunvegan, with its family treasures and heirlooms, is of high antiquity, and for time out of mind it has been the eyrie of the Macleods. Then there were the Macrimmons, the hereditary pipers of Dunvegan, so famous for their skill that pupils flocked to the isle from every part of Scotland. Proud of the fame of their pipers, the lairds of Dunvegan endowed a college of music, confined exclusively to pipers, on an adjoining promontory, and here some of the most famous of the fraternity received their training. Early in the present century, however, a dispute occurred between patron and professor, and the Macrimmon of the day shook the dust from his feet and departed. Since then the Pipers' College has been closed and its halls deserted.

Macleods and Macdonalds, if they agreed in nothing else, were united in devotion to the Jacobite cause. Some three thousand men from Skye joined the Earl of Mar and fought at Sheriffmuir, and, in connection with the rising of 1715, occurred one of those strange incidents which proverbially outstrip fiction. Years before, the daughter of Cheisly of Dalry, a fiery and headstrong race, had married Erskine of Grange, eventually Lord Justice Clerk and Lord Grange. The marriage was as unhappy as could be; the lady came to hate her husband, and he cordially reciprocated the

feeling. Lord Grange was brother to the Earl of Mar, the Chevalier's chief agent, and was naturally implicated, notwithstanding his high judicial office, in all the Jacobite plots of the period. Lady Grange's sympathies were all the other way; she played the spy upon her husband, waited, watched, and overheard, till at last she had in her possession evidence enough to bring her husband's, and many other distinguished heads, to the scaffold. Then she was surprised and detected in her turn, and the question arose, how to silence her for ever.

Macleod and Macdonald of Skye were of course implicated in the Jacobite plot, and their power among the lonely islands of the West favoured the scheme which was decided upon. Lady Grange was announced to be dangerously ill—to be dead. A mock funeral was arranged, and a coffin filled with stones was deposited in the family burial-ground. In the meantime, under trusty escort, Lady Grange was spirited away to the islands, first of all to North Uist, and then to lonely, desolate St. Kilda, where she was kept prisoner for seven years. At the end of that time she was brought back to Skye, and allowed a certain amount of freedom. She was permitted to make herself useful by spinning and winding wool, after the fashion of the women of the island; but she contrived to baffle the vigilant watch that was still kept upon her, and to enclose a letter to one of her old friends in a ball of yarn. The wool found its way to Edinburgh, the letter was found and forwarded to its address. The friend told the story to the authorities; a sloop of war was sent to Skye and a thorough search was made in the island; but Lady Grange was never found. Sometimes she was concealed in a lonely cavern; as pursuit grew hotter, she was forwarded in a boat to Uist. There was a running noose round her neck, and attached to the noose a heavy stone. The master of the boat had his orders. Should the Government ship heave in sight, over goes the lady.

When the search died away, Lady Grange was brought back to Skye. Her faculties probably were enfeebled by her long imprisonment and the hardships she had undergone. At last she died, and even then precautions were taken against her identification. A formal burial of an empty coffin took place in the parish graveyard of Duirinish; but the body was secretly interred in Waternish, where she died.

More romantic, even if not so sensational, is the story of Flora Macdonald, the well-

known preserver of Prince Charles Edward, whom she smuggled to the mainland in the disguise of her female servant; although the awkwardness of the Prince in managing his petticoats had more than once nearly betrayed him. For her share in the Prince's escape, Flora was committed to the Tower. But her imprisonment was rather a triumph than a punishment. All the great people visited her; the Prince of Wales himself—that Prince Fred, who was not a bad fellow, after all—heard her story with emotion, and moved heaven and earth to set her free. Then she married Allan Macdonald, of Kingsburgh, and went to North Carolina, but returned when the troubles began in the Colonies. Coming home, she helped to fight a French privateer. The rest of her life she spent quietly in Skye, where she died in 1790. Flora Macdonald had five sons and two daughters, the former all officers in the army, and the latter officers' wives; but no direct descendants of hers, it is believed, survive. Flora was buried in the graveyard of Kilmuir, and three thousand people were present at her funeral, "all liberally served with refreshment." And yet there is no monument to her memory, or was not recently, although every now and then some stir has been made to erect one.

A WELCOME.

GIVE me your hand. Oh, brother! see where rises
The bright New Year, clad in her pearl-white vest.
Her golden hair, that veils the sweet surprises
Held to her heart, streams o'er the sunset west,
Hiding the year that all too slow is dying,
Drying the tears that we therein have shed;
Her laughing voice doth sound above the sighing
That comes from those who'd mourn the year just dead.

Why should we mourn? True, some have gone before us;

Of them we know naught, save they've gone away.
Their voices failing from the merry chorus,

That once was wont to greet the rising day!

Their hands no longer with our hand-clasp meeting,
Their feet no longer pausing at our door,

Still they are gone; so, why should we be "greeting"?

We live; we love; and hail New Year once more.

True, in the year that now dies sad and lonely,

Our hearts were wrung, and disappointment's lore

Was ours most fully; things we deemed most holy

Showed their real selves, their great and secret sore.

Were we not foolish thus to vex and whimper?

Life has for us exactly what we take.

If for a smile she gives a vacuous simper,

Are hearts so brittle that of this they'd break?

The bells are tolling; dead he lies! Arisen,

Our sweet young Queen holds out her pretty hands.

Let Hope once more unlock our self-made prison,

Let us arise and face Life's robber-bands!

Smile with the tear, pain, pleasure mixed together,

Come with the fair year that was born to-night!

There's nothing new; only can we say whether

Our sky shall be o'ercast or clearly bright?

CONCERNING SLAVIES.

IN the sense that she neither receives nor requires any training to fit her for her work, the slavey, like the poet, is born, not made. If she happen to have any inherent aptitude for domestic labour, such aptitude is, in her case, the prosaic parallel to the poet's native wood-note wild, and it is exercised upon the principle by which the poet

Lisp'd in numbers, for the numbers came.

If she be possessed of such aptitude, so much the better for herself. She is the more likely to speedily emerge from the slavey condition; the less likely to "put up" with the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," in the shape of fault-finding, abuse, threats, and "jawing" generally, the sufferance of which is the badge of all her tribe. It is her powers of endurance in this respect, more even than in respect to hard living and hard work, that differentiates the slavey from the servant. In both respects she is sometimes called upon to endure so constantly and so greatly, that doubtless she oftentimes wishes she never had been born; or, if she has any unconscious touch of philosophy in her composition, wonders why she was born. At any rate, most other people would certainly regard her life as not worth living.

The use of the word "slavey" has been greatly extended of late years, being often applied generally to all female servants, save those of "upper" rank. The slavies here in view, however, are the "real original, and only genuine articles," the miserable, and perforce dirty and slatternly little maids-of-all-work, of whom, as a type, the "Marchioness" was rather an accentuation than an exaggeration. Servants unto servants are they, for they are largely employed by the poorest class of lodging-house keepers. In most other instances they are servants to those who can only afford to keep a servant at all by working them hard and paying them poorly.

Slavies are veritable grubs of the human species, and, as with other grubs, the fortunate ones among them develop into a chrysalis state, become such gorgeous creatures—by comparison—as sewing-machine girls, or, general servants proper: general servants, that is, of the type that wears coquettish caps; has morning, and evening, and "best" dresses; and patronises the elder, and flirts with the younger butchers', and bakers', and grocers' men; the type that

stands upon its rights in the matter of beer or beer-money, monthly holidays, evenings and Sundays out, and followers; that "flounces" if chidden; gives warning on slight provocation; and puts would-be mistresses to the question as to their methods of household management—the type of general servant, in short, that is regarded, and not without good cause, as the greatest plague in life. That this should be a predominating type of general servant is, in a large measure, due to the fact that the ranks of the "generals" are largely recruited from the slavies. The position is a social Nemesis—the reaping by one class of society of what another has sown—Nature's avengement of the wrongs of the slavey.

The slavey is usually the daughter of "poor, but honest parents." It is the parental poverty and honesty that combine to make her a slavey. The families of such parents increase, while their means of support do not. To continue in honesty of life; to pay as they go, and owe not any man; they must put their children out in the world early. When a girl is concerned, and the going out means entering domestic service, such service as is open to her must be accepted, and that is service of the slavey kind. On this point the law of "must" applies with a twofold force, being operative upon the side of the mistress as well as upon that of the maid. The parents cannot supply the girl with the outfit, lacking which no servant would be taken in any better-class servant's place. Even if the necessary dress could be provided, few mistresses of the better class would care to take as a servant a girl of thirteen, nor probably a girl of any age coming from such a home as a slavey usually comes from in the first instance. On the other hand, the style of mistress whose poverty or will consents to her having a slavey by way of servant, is either unwilling or unable—the latter as a rule—to offer the wages, accommodation, or privileges, without which no regular "general" would "demean herself" to accept a situation.

Sometimes the employer of the slavey is a wife and mother, of the artisan class, whose family is growing up around her. As they get older, the boys and girls require more and more "doing for." Martha, who is apprenticed to the millinery business, not only objects to black her own boots any longer, but thinks it "hard on her" that she should be expected to help mother even in the lighter household

duties. She contends, and probably with truth, that she has quite enough of work at business. Her brother Bill, who is in the third year of his "time," also objects to boot-blackening, on the ground that it is derogatory to manly dignity. Moreover, in his degree, he begins to develope "masher" propensities. When in the evening he casts his skin, so to speak, by putting off his working clothes, he is desirous of coming out strong in the matter of cuff and collar and shirt-front—and in that respect he has a soul above paper. Brother and sister alike wax more particular about their food; not as to its quantity, which is always sufficient, or its quality, which is always sound; but in the matter of having hot and set meals. They have friends of their own age come to see them, and will use the "best" room on week-day evenings, and insist upon things generally being in spick and span order so far as may be. Thus the household work and washing is increased, until "mother" is driven to declare that it is too much for one pair of hands, and that she must have help. If the young folks are adding to the domestic labours, they are also contributing to the family income, the total of which is now sufficient to afford payment for the assistance mother requires. That she shall have help is agreed "nem. con.;" and after a family council as to whether the help shall take the shape of a washerwoman or charwoman one or two days a week, or the engagement of a slavey, the votes of the youngsters decide the point in favour of the latter course, and a slavey is accordingly engaged.

The slavey, at the commencement of her career, at any rate, is usually a willing little creature, and in such a household as we are here contemplating, the burden laid upon her is calculated to tax to the utmost both her will and strength. She finds herself very literally a maid-of-all-work. She is boot-black, knife-cleaner, stove-polisher, and floor-scrubber. She stands to the washtub with her mistress, and helps to hang out the clothes. If she shows any "native talent" for the more skilled operations of starching and ironing, she is taught to assist in them also; while if she lacks such talent, she is heartily "dratted" for the want of it. As kitchen-maid, the potato-peeling, pea-shelling, vegetable-washing, and the like, fall to her share; and in this connection she finds herself to a considerable extent between two stools. Over this, no less than over other work, the constant cry of the "missis" is "look

sharp!" but here the slavey has others to consider besides missis, and her desire is rather to be sure than sharp. Master, she has to bear in mind, is "werry perticular" as to the prompt and proper preparation of his meals; and young Bill more so. If at dinner time "eyes" are found in the potatoes, she is more than "dratted;" while should it chance that a boiled caterpillar is served up with the cabbage, it will be well for her that she should not be in the way to answer the waked wrath of Master Bill at the moment the unappetising discovery is made. He might be tempted to shy the dish at her. Now that they have got a slavey, Bill, who tries in all things to "come the man," thinks it dignified and "the thing" to be waited upon. He will have the slavey unlace his boots, bring his slippers, search for his mislaid tobacco-pouch, and fetch and carry for him. Mother sometimes objects to this on the ground that it takes her maid-of-all-work from more legitimate and pressing occupations, to which Bill replies that it is no use keeping a dog and barking yourself. That, for the time being—for as yet he is but in his green and salad days—is Bill's notion of an epigram; and it is rather with a view to being epigrammatic than out of any real want of feeling that he answers thus. Nevertheless, on the principle that evil is wrought by want of thought as well as want of heart, "Bill's ways" are hard upon the slavey. Martha, as becomes her sex, is cast in gentler mould than her brother; but she too, in her milder way, claims suit and service at the hands of the slavey, exacting from her whatever help in the cruder forms of lady's-maiding she may be capable of rendering.

One way or another the slavey has an exceedingly busy time of it. She is kept hard at it from morning till night, and though but a child, has ample and practical proof of the truth of the saying "that a woman never knows when her day's work is done." That, so far as her strength will allow, she should do the most laborious and drudgical portions of the house-work is taken as a matter of course; and though she is bound to get through it, she is not permitted to stick to it systematically. That she is entitled to any consideration upon that point is a thing undreamed of in the philosophy of her employers. She is expected to be generally and constantly at beck and call. With her arms wet or face smudged she is called from floor scrubbing or fire-grate cleaning to go upon an errand.

"Running of errands" is a leading feature in her work. The slavey does not wear caps: she cannot "find herself" in them, and her mistress does not feel called upon to find them. Beside, though the cap goes well with the natty aprons, and neat cotton frocks, which are the ordinary wear of the better class of general servants, it would simply serve to show up the shabbiness and dinginess of the rest of the slavey's attire. As a rule she has only the garments she stands up in; and even if she had others, she would not be allowed the time necessary for changing and rechanging her dress, upon each occasion that she was sent upon an errand. Thus it happens that in all weathers and at all times in the day—though more especially when meal times are approaching—she may be seen scuffling along the streets bare-headed, bare-armed, down at heel, and not infrequently waving in her hand as she goes, the red-backed memorandum book, which to the initiated indicates that her mistress has a credit account with some of her tradespeople. The slavey is expected to shop promptly, accurately, and economically, and that she is usually capable of doing. The poverty of her own home has the effect of making such a girl keen in this respect. Moreover, when shopping for her mistress, the slavey does so at her own risk, so to speak. Should she, over a ready-money transaction, bring the change short in amount, or with a bad or doubtful coin in it, she must go back and compel the tradesman to rectify the matter, or else make good the loss out of her own scanty pay. Or if any article with which she allows herself to be served is held not to be of the kind ordered, or not up to sample in point of quality, she must get it exchanged, or obtain back the money paid for it. These are anything but pleasant phases of the shopping business, as shopkeepers are apt to "ride rusty" over them; but of course it is not to be supposed that a slavey has any such thing as sensitiveness in her character. Feeling or sentiment on the part of a slavey would be regarded as affectation or presumption. Indeed, that she should be subject to even the physical ills that flesh in general is heir to, is looked upon as being almost in the nature of an intentional offence upon her part. And she is a good deal subjected to some of those ills. In the winter months she has usually a cold upon her, and suffers from "chapped" hands and chilblained feet. But that she should complain—"make a song"—her mistress would probably call it—about

her ailments, or should cough, or limp, or shrink from putting her hands into soda-impregnated "suds"—that she should do such things as these, is accounted as part of her aggravating ways; like smashing the crockery or "scrunching" cinders on the carpets.

In the service of a well-to-do working class household the slavey has perhaps her best type of place, though, as will have been gathered from what has been stated above, that is not saying much. In such a household she will be sure of good food and plenty of it, and she will feel more at home than she would do in more ambitious establishments. It is in a household of that stamp that she has her best opportunities of learning to be a competent servant. The mistress is, as a rule, a good all-round worker. She teaches her maid-of-all-work by example as well as precept, and has her constantly under her own eye. If the family treat her in a rough-and-ready fashion, it is not from any snobbish notions of class distinction; it is because it is their nature to, because they are themselves rough and ready.

Another type of place that falls to the lot of the slavey is that in which the mistress has to earn part—not infrequently the greater part—of the family income by taking in dressmaking, or keeping a small shop, or something of that kind. Women so situated are often young mothers, so that in these cases there is the chance of a nursemaid's duty being added to the more ordinary work of the slavey. This is bad for the slavey; but it is worse for the baby. In a place of this kind the slavey is a good deal left to her own devices. The mistress has not time to look after her thoroughly, and, generally speaking, is herself not much of a hand in the matter of domestic management. As a consequence, it is here that the slavey touches the highest point of all her greatness in the way of slatternliness. Under such conditions of domestic existence the slavey gains nothing in the way of training. When she leaves her place, it is not to take higher rank as a servant—she is unfit for that—but, generally, for some of the less skilled and more poorly paid factory employment in which female hands are engaged.

So far as the quantity of work exacted from her goes, the slavey finds her hardest place in the house whose mistress—though not calling herself a lodging-house keeper, and not wholly dependent upon her "lettings"—still takes in lodgers and "does

for them." Here the slavey has worry as well as work. The lodgers badger and order about the mistress, and she passes it on to her drudge with interest. But if mistress and maid have their jars, their relations are not altogether of a jarring order. The principle that a fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind comes in with a softening influence. There are times when the mistress is so "put out" over the doings—or, as she considers them, the misdoings—of her lodgers, that she feels that she must speak, and, having no one else at hand to speak to, unbosoms herself to her assistant. In these moments of confidence, mistress and maid cordially unite in discussing and criticising, and, it may be, anathematising the lodgers. They are as friends and equals in denouncing the fidgettiness upon the subject of table linen of the parlour ladies—maiden sisters of uncertain age—or the "expectingness" of the second-floor sitting-and-bedroom-combined young man, "who throws off his sneers" because his tea-dinner is not always served hot and on the instant, though he does not come home to it with punctuality. Such points as these come home to the business and bosom alike of landlady and slavey, and make them of one mind and one tongue. But none are all evil—not even lodgers. In a place of this kind the slavey finds certain compensations for the hard work imposed upon her. The lodgers are not boarders, they "find themselves," and the slavey falls heir to a share of the broken dainties that come from their tables. The lodgers are wont to assert that in this matter the slavey stands not on the order of her getting. If the good things come to her by deed of gift, well and good, they are thankfully received and keenly appreciated. When they are not given to her, she—according to the allegation of the lodgers—reverts to first principles, and goes in for self-help in the literal interpretation of the term. As a matter of fact it must be admitted that the average slavey will pick, when tempted by the sight and savours of viands which to her are rich and rare. On this point the flesh is weak with her, but apart from the food question she is passing honest. If she is found wearing the cast-off garments of lady lodgers, they will have been presented to her. In the same way if at Christmas or other holiday times she is found flush of money—for a slavey, that is—it is because the lodgers, whether men or women, having some of the milk of human

kindness in their nature, have "remembered" the little household drudge in current coin of the realm.

The last and worst class of slavey situation is that of the "let-us-be-genteel-or-die" order. The sort of place in which the mistress is poor but genteel—even more genteel than poor. Such a mistress attempts to play the rôle of the fine lady upon the strength of one poor slavey. It is against the canons of such pitiful gentility as hers that she should do anything "menial;" and her chief desire, in relation to household affairs, is to be able to boast that "she does not need to soil her hands." As a consequence, the whole of the domestic labours of the establishment is, as far as possible, put upon the slavey. It is an essential feature of gentility of this stamp to pinch wherever pinching can be effected without meeting the eye. One result of this is that, in a poor but genteel place, the slavey is underfed as well as overworked. Hard work and hard fare, however, she might stand; it is generally upon a side issue, the question of answering the door, that the relations between mistress and maid become strained. It is held to be an attestation of gentility that a servant should answer the door, otherwise there could be no genteel ceremony of taking in the names of callers, or ascertaining whether mistress is at home, or the like. Moreover, if the mistress answered the door herself, she might be suspected of not having a servant, of having to soil her hands. But the slavey is not only called upon to open the door, she is found fault with for not being presentable when she does open it. At this even the slavey—the domestic worm—turns. And it certainly is unreasonable to expect any girl to double the parts of slavey and "neat-handed Phyllis." With the slavey Nature is subdued to what it works in—dirt. She is almost literally clothed in sackcloth and ashes. An old sack, which can be purchased for two or three pence, will split up into a couple of over-all aprons, and a sack apron of this description fastened on by an extemporised harness of rough twine, is the favourite wear of the representative slavey. Sacking absorbs dirt freely, and it is not "a washing material." After a little wear a sack apron becomes so dirt-stiffened that it would scarcely be a figure of speech to say of it that it would stand alone, while the hands and face of the slavey are always abundantly grimed and smudged. To use

the old joke, the slavey is a daughter of the soil, with a good deal of her mother on her face. In the kitchen she is more or less in harmony with her environment, but, summoned from the lower regions to answer the door in a cottage of gentility, she is certainly a comically incongruous figure. But that is not her fault, and, as already intimated, she resents being rated for it as though it were. The individual slavey rarely stays long in a genteel place, and after a time a mistress of the genteel order has often a difficulty in getting a slavey at all. There is a certain degree of freemasonry among the slavies of any given district, and the boycotting of a bad place is by no means unknown among them. Though the genteel mistress will rarely give her late slavey a character, the slavies are always prepared to give her one, though hardly of a kind that she would care to use as a testimonial.

Numbers of those who employ slavies are not in a position to afford them sleeping accommodation, and the girls have to trudge to and fro—often considerable distances—morning and night. In wet and cold weather this is no slight hardship to girls who are poorly clad and ill shod, and who, as a class, suffer greatly from chapped hands and chilblained feet. When the slavey does sleep at her place, the sleeping arrangements provided for her are usually of an uncomfortable, not to say unhealthy, character. If she has what is, by courtesy, called a room to herself, it is generally some cornered-off, unventilated space more in the nature of a cupboard than a room proper, while very often she has to sleep by night in the underground kitchen in which she works by day, a makeshift bed being rigged up each night and cleared away each morning.

As previously hinted, the whirligig of time brings its revenges to the slavey. If she takes *Excelsior* for her motto, and rises to still higher spheres than that of a "regular" general servant, she can come out strong with those who were her mistresses in her slavey days. If she attains to the position of nurse or housemaid in an establishment the heads whereof are in society, and keep a full rank of servants, she is regarded as a desirable acquaintance by those who are or seek to be dwellers on the threshold of gentility. They know, of course, that she is not the rose, but she lives near it. She can tell not only of high life below stairs, but of the sayings and doings of "our people." If the family

in whose service she is engaged happens to be titled, as well as rich, and she can talk of "my Lady" and "my Lord," or even "Sir John," her position is by so much the stronger. To those who care to listen to a servant's gossip about her "people," such gossip is "as good as a novel." Probably that is the case to a greater extent than such listeners wot of. Even when founded on fact, a servant's chatter about her "people" has generally a good deal of fiction in it; in that connection your servant is a ready romancer. To see a servant of the upper circles patronising her former mistress of—let us say—the lower middle class, and enlightening her as to the habits and customs of the aristocracy, is an amusing bit of comedy in real life. Apart even from the humour of the situation, there are often enough genuine though unconscious touches of comedy in the dialogue. If, however, the particular "people" concerned could hear their servant's stories of their lives, they would probably be more amazed than amused. But let the galled jade wince; to those whose withers are unwrung the thing is laughable.

Though here it is chiefly the woes of the slavies that have been dwelt upon, there has been no desire to inferentially represent the slavey as a perfect character. She is far from being the faultless monster that the world ne'er saw. Often enough she is more or less incapable, and, in some instances, she is slatternly by nature, as well as by force of circumstances. That she occasionally has a weakness for "tolling" food has already been admitted, and, generally speaking, she is great in the glass and crockery breaking line. In this connection she is not given to vexing the soul of her mistress by mentioning any disaster that may not have attracted immediate attention, and, if put to the question upon such a point, her answers are framed with a greater regard to expediency than to truth. She will loiter when "going on errands;" she has been known to wax impudent, and in these latter days she is much addicted to secretly devoting to the perusal of "penny dreadfuls" time which ought to be, and is supposed to be, devoted to work. All this, however, only amounts to saying that the slavey is very human. Taking one consideration with another, her life is not a happy one. On the whole, she is more sinned against than sinning; more to be pitied than blamed.

Time was when slavies were chiefly

drawn from workhouse schools, and in those days it sometimes befell that unfortunate parish orphans found themselves in the clutches of mistresses of the Mother Brownrigg stamp. A generation ago, cases of grossly inhuman treatment of parish apprentices and servants were of comparatively frequent occurrence. But

After the Martyr, the Deliverer comes.

The discovery, from time to time, of the sufferings to which such friendless boys and girls were subjected led to a radical improvement in this respect. The Guardians of the Poor are, in the present day, really and practically guardians to orphans officially committed to their charge. Persons now wishing to engage servants from Union schools can only do so upon the principle of "references exchanged." They can have their choice of such girls as may be eligible for service, but they are called upon to satisfy the Guardians that they are in a position to offer a comfortable home and proper sleeping accommodation. The Guardians on the one hand supply such an outfit as will enable the girl to make a cleanly and respectable appearance as a servant, and on the other hand make it a specific condition of the contract that they or their officers are to have the right of periodical visitation, with a view to satisfying themselves that the girl is being properly cared for in her place. By the class who employ slaves these conditions are regarded as being "too blessed particular," and they do not "trouble the Union." As a result among the poor, the pauper girl, if commencing life as a domestic servant, will be able to start in a higher grade than the non-pauper girl. It is from the non-pauper classes that the slaves are now drawn. To any philanthropist in search of a mission we would suggest the establishment of an institution, that should do for girls of the non-pauper class what the Guardians do for the pauper class. If such an institution could be made generally operative, we would have more and better servants and fewer slaves, a state of affairs by which employers and employed would alike benefit.

ON THE SELF-PERCEPTION OF GREATNESS.

JOHN RUSKIN has said that "the gods mercifully hide from great men the knowledge how great they are." This is a doctrine that requires considerable modi-

fication before it can be generally accepted. There is abundant evidence that many of the world's greatest warriors, poets, and statesmen had a very exalted notion of their own influence, not only over their own times, but over all time. Alexander the Great was so enamoured of his own performances, that he desired divine honours while yet on earth, and put to death the philosopher who reproved him for the impiety. Lycurgus was so charmed with the beauty and greatness of his political establishment, that he desired to make it immortal, and took singular means to do so. Assembling the people, he exacted from them an oath that they would inviolably observe all his laws, without altering anything in them until he returned from Delphi, whither he was going to consult the oracle. On arriving there, however, he put an end to his life, so that the citizens could never be relieved from the obligation they had taken. Horace boasted that his fame would extend as far as the banks of the Rhone, and as that poet died in the century immediately preceding the Christian Era, the vaunt was equivalent to an avowal that his renown would reach to the uttermost parts of the earth. Ovid is still more emphatic in the declaration of his belief in his own greatness. In the peroration to the *Metamorphoses* there is a passage which may be translated thus: "And now I have completed a work, which neither the anger of Jove, nor fire, nor steel, nor consuming time will be able to destroy! Let that day, which has no power but over this body, put an end to the term of my uncertain life, when it will; yet, in my better part, I shall be raised immortal above the lofty stars, and indelible shall be my name. And wherever the Roman power is extended throughout the vanquished earth, I shall be read by the lips of nations, and (if the pressages of poets have aught of truth), throughout all ages shall I survive in fame."

Pietro Aretino, who lived from 1492 to 1557, may not be classed as a great man, though he is still widely read. He, however, not only believed that his fame would last for ever; but that his prurient verses were divinely inspired, and that his satires would for ever entitle him to be called "the scourge of Princes."

It is not necessary, however, to refer either to ancient times, or to foreign countries, to illustrate the matter under consideration. So little is known of

Shakespeare's private life that it is impossible to ascertain what opinion he had of his own marvellous genius, and his retirement to an obscure mode of living might suggest a modest conception of his importance. In Sonnet LV., however, he says :

Not marble, not the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme ;

adding, that the subject of the sonnet shall shine bright "in these contents," and

... Your praise shall still find room,
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.

It is seen, therefore, that Shakespeare had a tolerably clear notion that he could write something that would live ; and this view is emphasised, if it be true, as some authorities urge, that Shakespeare's "Sonnets" are merely fanciful exercises, and had no living subject whatever.

Passing from Shakespeare to Wordsworth, it is found that the Grasmere poet spoke of his own writings in language which, uttered by any one else, would have been styled braggadocio. His poems were not at first very well received, and in reply to a friend who consoled with him, Wordsworth wrote : "Trouble not yourself about their present reception. Of what moment is that compared to what, I trust, is their destiny ?—to console the afflicted ; to add sunshine to daylight, by making the happy happier ; to teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think, and feel ; and, therefore, to become more actively and securely virtuous ; this is their office, which, I trust, they will faithfully perform long after we are mouldered in our graves." And of his "Sonnets Dedicated to Liberty" he says : "I would boldly say at once that these sonnets, while they each fix the attention upon some important sentiment, separately considered, do, at the same time, collectively make a poem on the subject of civil liberty and national independence, which, either for simplicity of style or grandeur of moral sentiment, is, alas ! likely to have few parallels in the poetry of the present day." Again, to Southey he wrote : "Let the age continue to love its own darkness ; I shall continue to write with, I trust, the light of Heaven upon me." It would not be difficult to give many other instances of this self-apprehension of greatness in many other poets. Byron at a very early age recognised that he was "famous," and the notion rather grew upon him than otherwise. Oliver

Goldsmith, who seemed to court the praise of his contemporaries and to care little for that of posterity, still declared that "The Deserted Village" would cause his name to live. Henry Kirke White, who surely was modest enough, yet described even his earliest poems as "very respectable." Burns, who certainly did not over-estimate his own splendid genius, knew, however, that his reputation would live, and when near his end showed great concern about his literary fame, fearing that attempts would be made to injure and debase it. The same self-recognition of genius marks some writers yet living. Mr. Edwin Arnold is the most recent instance. Every one who has read his "Light of Asia" must have admired the beauty of its numbers, the elegance of its diction, and the sweetness of its cadence. It is doubtful, however, if anyone has foretold such a future for his works as he has himself prophesied. In the dedication to his daughter of "The Secret of Death" and other poems, he boasts "I know my verse shall henceforth live on lips to be, in hearts as yet unbeating," that "The East and West will some day give . . . late praise to him who dreamed it."

Others than poets have had similar presages, though these are expressed in less florid periods. This is natural. Poets have a licence of language and of thought, not permitted to those who are incapable of vivid imagery, and who write or talk ordinary prose. These, however, are equally emphatic in their declarations. In cataloguing such men two classes may be dispensed with. The first consists of those who are regarded as founders of religions. With the remarkable exception of the Budha, who pretended to nothing supernatural, founders of religion, from Mahomet (who was, perhaps, sincere) to Joseph Smith (who was certainly an impostor), have all pretended to a divine or supernatural revelation and influence. A declaration of the immortality of their spoken and written words was part of their programmes or policies, and as it is difficult to say whether they themselves believed what they said and wrote, it is not necessary to introduce them here. Secondly, the authors of autobiographies may be put aside, or rather merely referred to en masse. When a person writes his own life, or, as in the case of Dr. Johnson, artistically comports himself to his acknowledged biographer, it is evident that he believes he has lived a life which ought to be recorded, and

that, having done something for posterity, it is only right that posterity should do something for him. This very action on the part of such persons shows that they had a consciousness of their own importance in and to the world.

Coming to others, a few only shall be instanced, and these merely mentioned. It is evident that both Clive and Wallenstein believed they were reserved for something great, simply because of the failure of their attempts to commit suicide, though it cannot be said that either had then shown much promise of making a mark in the world. Sir Robert Peel plainly declared that, by his abolition of the Corn Law, he had earned the gratitude of every cottager in the kingdom. Mr. Bright prophesied that those who opposed that reform would be forgotten, while those who conducted the agitation which accomplished it would live in the hearts of their countrymen; and it would have been, and would be, mock-modesty not to include himself amongst the foremost of those to whom he prophesied fame. Sir Isaac Newton knew the value of his discoveries, and his modesty in describing them as pebbles gathered from the beach of an unexplored ocean does not detract from, but emphasises, the knowledge. Fielding likened himself to "those heroes who, of old times, became voluntary sacrifices to the good of the public;" and many others might be added to those names which have been selected merely for the variety of their respective vocations.

Recurring to Ruskin's dictum already quoted, it may be urged that what he meant was that great men are unconscious of the quantity of their greatness—that, for instance, Mahomet could not foresee that the empire he founded would extend from Persia to Spain; or that Ovid and Horace could not imagine themselves delighting millions of readers in England, America, and Australia. This, however, would be a very strained construction. Carlyle utters the sentiment intended to be conveyed much more clearly, when he says: "Your true hero is ever unconscious that he is a hero: this is a condition of all greatness." It must be admitted that there is much corroboration of such a maxim, and all that has been maintained here is that it is not universally applicable. Against Ovid's bold presage may be quoted Virgil's death-bed request, that the MS. of his *Æneid* should be burnt, because of its imperfections, which he had not had time to

remedy. Coleridge neither expected nor wished for fame, poetry itself having been to him its own "exceeding great reward." Shelley wrote to Leigh Hunt: "I am, and I desire to be nothing;" which was doubtless true, or he would not have buried the sparkling gems of his genius in such a mass of twaddle, as he and everyone else admits much that he wrote to be. The late Earl of Shaftesbury, too, was content that his works and not his name should live. "I do not wish to be recorded," he said; and yet, if ever man deserved recording, it was surely he.

It remains to add, that nothing is here urged as detracting from great men because of the knowledge of their greatness. It is, indeed, difficult to imagine how a man, strong in, and true to, his convictions, can do otherwise than recognise his greatness, especially when the fruit of his labours is before his eyes. It certainly requires greater prescience to foresee that ages yet to come will realise the truths and the wisdom presently despised, but the difference is merely one of degree; and while many men may be great and know it not, fully as many, if not more, see themselves as others see them, and feel that they have earned a fame that will never perish.

HOW I STRUCK OIL.

A STORY IN TWO PARTS.

PART I.

"AND so you've got just twelve months in which to raise ten thousand pounds?"

"Yes."

"And, of course, if you can't raise it, Wylie forecloses and secures the estate?"

"That is so."

"Do you think there's the remotest possibility that you will get the money?"

"Well yes, I do."

"I am afraid you're deceiving yourself. You might, of course, borrow such a sum on the estate itself, provided it were unencumbered, but, when it is already mortgaged up to that amount, no one in his senses would advance you a penny on it; for you know that, since it was mortgaged, the property has fallen to something like half of its original value owing to your uncle's careless management."

"But, my dear sir, I have no intention of borrowing the money. I mean to make it."

At these brave words Polly looked at me proudly and gave me a little caressing

pat on the arm, while old Gunson, Polly's father, grinned sardonically.

"Do you know any trade or business?"

"No."

"Have you studied any profession?"

"No."

"Have you tested your value in the labour market?"

"No, not yet. But I mean to."

Mr. Gunson lit a cigar and smoked deliberately.

"A fortnight ago," he said grimly, "I wanted a junior clerk. I advertised. The salary, remember, was fifty pounds a year. I had nearly two hundred applications. If you had been one of those applicants, my boy, I shouldn't have accepted you. Educated as you have been at Eton and Oxford, it wouldn't be worth my while to pay you ten shillings a week."

I was naturally rather nettled; Polly was indignant. But old Gunson smoked on with perfect placidity.

"I have no intention of becoming a junior clerk," I answered. "If I go in for business at all, it shall be as a principal."

"I know three young men who started business on their own account several months ago," replied Mr. Gunson. "They had each a nice little sum to begin with, more, I think, than you can possibly command, and, moreover, they had all been thoroughly well trained, and were good business men. Within a year one failed; another drew out and went to New Zealand; and the remaining one makes, I should think, about a hundred and fifty pounds a year and considers himself lucky to do so."

"I suppose they went on in a jog-trot sort of way," I said impatiently. "That isn't my line at all. I shouldn't stick in the mud like that. I should speculate."

"Indeed," said old Gunson sarcastically. "I've had a large acquaintance with speculators. I knew a man who, a fortnight ago, was worth fifty thousand pounds. He isn't worth a penny now."

"I suppose he was reckless. Went in for anything that turned up."

"Nothing whatever of the sort. He's one of the longest headed men on 'Change. Plodding, cautious, and as sharp as a razor."

I was silent for the moment, and felt small and uncomfortable. Polly took up the cudgels on my behalf.

"I think it's very unkind of you, papa, to discourage Jack in that way. Just because those stupid men couldn't make money quickly, it doesn't follow that Jack can't."

"Fiddlesticks, child! I'm only telling him the facts of the case. What's the good of his building castles in the air that haven't the slightest foundation in reality. It's better to tell him the plain truth at once, instead of letting him deceive himself. It's only in fairy tales and novels, that men in Jack's position make ten thousand pounds in a single year. In actual life it's an impossibility."

"Not for Jack," said Polly.

"For Jack or anyone else, and he'd better realise it at once. Still, I don't want to be hard on him. I'll give him a chance. If he can raise the money in twelve months, and pay off the mortgage, I shall oppose your engagement no longer."

"Thank you, Mr. Gunson; thank you—thank you," I cried, wringing his hand affectionately.

Mr. Gunson repossessed himself of the shaken member.

"Gently, gently, my boy," he said ruefully. "My bones are not so young as they used to be. And then you mustn't forget the other side of the bargain. If you don't pay off the mortgage, I will never consent to your engagement with Polly. You understand me clearly. There must be no doubt about that."

Polly left the couch on which we had been sitting side by side, and knelt by her father's chair.

"Papa," she said, caressing his hand and looking wistfully into his face, "you're not really in earnest, are you? You're only joking?"

"Not a bit of it, my girl. I'm as solemn as a tombstone."

"And do you really think there isn't the least chance of Jack paying off the mortgage?"

"Well, in the ordinary course of things I don't suppose there is. It would be nothing short of a miracle if he did."

Polly laid her soft cheek against his arm and said in a low voice:

"And if I told you that I could never love anyone but Jack, because we've loved each other so long—ever since we were tiny children—and that I'd rather be his wife, however poor he was, than marry the richest man in the world, wouldn't it make any difference, papa?"

"Tut, tut!" said old Gunson. "Where's the sense in talking like that, you silly child? I'm not a Bluebeard or a Pasha. I'm not going to chop your head off, or Jack's either. The whole affair's perfectly straightforward. You're an expensive little

baggage, as I know from experience, and it's absolutely essential, for your own happiness, that you should marry a rich man. You'd ruin a poor man in a week. You shan't get my money till I die; and I mean to live a good while yet, I can assure you. So if Jack becomes a pauper, you can't, and you shan't, marry him. If he succeeds—and the chances are a thousand to one that he won't—well, I've said I shan't oppose your engagement any longer, and I'll keep my word. I've always liked Jack from a boy, and I've always thought that his uncle's property and mine joined together would make one of the finest estates in the county."

The old gentleman put his thumbs through the armholes of his waistcoat, and beamed on us with a gentle and benevolent smile. He was not in the least angry, the affair was too trifling for that. He regarded us with the tender half-pitying gaze with which he might have looked at a couple of babies in knickerbockers and short frocks, who wanted to get married and live in a doll's house. I don't know that his view of the situation was far wrong. Polly was eighteen and I was twenty-one and a half, and our knowledge of the world was principally gained from novels, and school and college experiences. Our paths had hitherto been strewn with roses, and so we had all the lofty contempt for money, which sometimes animates the souls of idealistic young people who know nothing of the struggle for existence or the dreariness of poverty.

When her father finished speaking, Polly rose without a word, and standing beside me, looked dreamily out of the window at the gathering shadows of the twilight.

"I think," remarked old Gunson presently, "I think Jack had better be going now. I expect Wylie, your mortgagee here this evening, Jack, and I don't want any scenes. In fact, I saw him walking up the drive a moment ago, so there's no time to lose. You'd better go out the back way, my boy."

I went. It required a considerable amount of self-control to do so. I should have liked to remain, and calmly but firmly deprive Wylie of existence; and my thoughts towards the venerable parent of my beloved one were not full of the charity that thinketh no evil. For Wylie, the mortgagee of my property was also my rival, and, as far as Mr. Gunson was concerned, a favoured rival. I knew too well that the chief ambition of that mercenary old

gentleman was to join the two properties, his own, and that which I had inherited, in one; and he evidently believed, and with reason, that Wylie's chance of becoming the ultimate possessor of "The Willows," was considerably greater than mine. Early left an orphan, I had been adopted by a bachelor uncle, who had brought me up as though I was the heir to a dukedom, and, dying, had bequeathed me an estate so hopelessly involved, that it was practically worth nothing to me. He was an easy, careless man who moved in high society, and spent his money with reckless profusion. There was not even sufficient to pay the interest of the mortgage, and that very evening I had been obliged to inform Mr. Gunson that, unless I could raise the sum of ten thousand pounds within twelve months, the estate would pass into the hands of Fred Wylie, my rival and mortgagee. Polly and I had loved each other since childhood, but her father would never consent to our engagement until, as he expressed it, he saw how "Old Dalton," my deceased uncle, "would cut up." Since my uncle's death had disclosed the disastrous condition of his affairs, I knew that Mr. Gunson had regarded Wylie's attentions to Polly with more and more friendly eyes.

Polly followed me into the hall to say good-bye, for Mr. Gunson had decreed that I should not see her again until the twelve months had expired. She walked with me through the conservatory in silence, until we came to a door which opened on to the back garden. Then she took off a little blue silk neckerchief and tied it round my arm, a pitiful smile hovering upon her trembling lips.

"Now," she said softly, "you are my knight, my brave Sir Galahad; and you are going out to fight the dragon, the great cruel world, with your lady's token on your arm. Oh, Jack, I think my heart will break. I can't bear it. I can't bear it!"

"Why, little one," I said, kissing her tearful eyes, "you mustn't send me away with such a sorrowful face as that. I can't fight bravely if I think you are sad and desponding. You must be hopeful, dear. Why, before a year's out, I shall be back again, never fear, and little Polly and The Willows shall both be mine in spite of all the Wylies in the world."

"Yes, yes, Jack, I know you will do your best, but——"

It was long before I could tear myself away, and, when at length I left her, she called me back.

"I only wanted to say, Jack," she said, trying to smile and toying with the flower in my coat, "that suppose—a year's such a long, long time, you know—that suppose we should never see each other again, I don't want you to think hardly of me."

"Polly!"

"Yes; you know I've often been peevish and irritable; but I didn't mean to be, and the love deep down in my heart was always the same, Jack."

"You dear little goose," I exclaimed, "what nonsense you're talking!"

"No, no; it isn't nonsense, Jack! but I know you'll forgive me. Hush! I hear papa calling. Good-bye, Jack, good-bye."

She turned and left me, and yet as I looked back on my way out I could see that she was still lingering at the door of the conservatory to wave me a last farewell. Even now I can hardly keep the tears from my eyes when I think of it.

Ten thousand pounds in a year! Is there any talisman known to the human race by which so remarkable a feat can be accomplished? I do not mean, of course, by the lucky few—the leading merchants, barristers, artists, or landowners; but by such untrained and impecunious individuals as myself. Men of boundless resource, with a profound knowledge of the world and of the most direct means of acquiring wealth, often toil with ceaseless energy for many a weary year without achieving what I, an ignorant boy, hoped to accomplish in the course of a few months. The vast majority of mankind think themselves lucky if they earn enough to live comfortably upon from day to day. What hope, what slenderest chance, existed that I should prove so immeasurably more fortunate than they? Only my utter ignorance of the world prevented me from abandoning so hopeless an undertaking. As it was, I set about my task with a vigour and light-heartedness that were really astonishing under the circumstances. A very little consideration showed even me that it was impossible to accomplish my purpose through the ordinary channels of trade; and the attempts I thereupon made to diverge from the beaten paths to opulence, were a sufficient proof of my refreshing innocence of the world and all its ways.

I tried literature first. I wrote a number of stories and articles, and forwarded them to the leading periodicals. One after another they were returned, with those polite little notes which kindly editors have devised to soothe the feelings of literary aspirants.

Foiled in this direction I unearthed a novel which I had written at odd times during the previous year. As a last chance I polished it up, proceeded to London, and called at the chambers of a literary man to whom I had secured an introduction.

I found him in dressing-gown and slippers, smoking a cigar, and perusing a dilapidated volume of ancient literature. He suppressed a shudder with great fortitude when I produced my MS., but I thought his eyes twinkled when I dilated upon my hopes and ambitions.

"Of course," I explained, "I don't suppose there is any chance of raising the whole sum in this way. I can hardly expect to be so lucky as that."

"Well," he remarked drily, "I should say that would be, perhaps, a little too much to expect."

His manner was scarcely encouraging; but eventually I left the MS. with him, and agreed to call again in the course of two or three days. Those intervening days were about the longest I ever spent.

When the appointed time arrived I found him glancing over my MS.

"I understand," he said, "that you have no intention of eventually adopting a literary career."

"Well, no, I think not."

"Exactly so. That was my impression. Now, to speak candidly, if you had really set your heart on becoming a novelist, I should have advised you to take your MS. home again and re-write the whole of it."

"The whole of it?"

"Yes, my dear sir, from beginning to end. You may take my word for it, that in its present condition you might as well throw it into the Thames as offer it to a publisher. In addition to this advice, I should have given you the benefit of a long and somewhat varied experience, in the shape of any suggestions that might have occurred to me."

"But it would take me months to re-write it."

"No doubt of it. And even when you had done so, being as yet entirely unknown to the public, you would find great difficulty in securing a publisher, and common sense must show you that any sum paid to an untried writer could be little more than nominal. In short, my dear fellow, if you really meant business, I should be the last person to discourage you; but, as it is, let me strongly recommend you not to waste your time, and expose yourself to useless disappointment.

I haven't the least idea how you will be able to accomplish the task you have undertaken, but believe me there isn't the slightest chance of your performing it by the aid of this—you'll excuse the expression—rather elementary production."

Greenhorn as I was, I saw that his advice was sound, and told him, though I daresay somewhat ruefully, that I should follow it.

"Good-bye, Mr. Drysdale," he said, as I took my leave, "I wish you all possible success. And, by-the-way, if you discover any means of making ten thousand pounds in twelve months, I shall be delighted if you'll let me into the secret."

I had a few hundreds of ready money to dispose of, so I tried a little speculation on the Stock Exchange. I had a friend—Smith by name, something or other in the City, I don't know exactly what—who dabbled in that sort of thing, and I immediately went to consult him. His eyes lighted up with pleasure, and he patted me enthusiastically on the back.

"We'll do it, my boy!" he exclaimed, "we'll do it. I've got about the best thing on I ever had in my life. We'll go in for Egyptians. The public's an ass, you know; and the public thinks that Arabi Pasha's going to make a rumpus in Egypt; consequently Egyptians are coming down with a run. But it's all gammon, my boy. I know better. In another week Egyptians will be higher than ever, and you'll literally coin money, just coin it. We'll go in for Egyptians, my dear fellow. Just buy 'em wholesale."

We did, and before a week had passed I was glad to get rid of them for anything they would bring. There has been a slight estrangement between Smith and me since then, for I felt that he had acted imprudently.

Then I turned my attention to the stage. I was not so hopelessly ignorant as to be very sanguine about the result; but my imagination was fired by the career of various theatrical stars, and I knew little of the struggles and training which had preceded and ensured success. I was slightly acquainted with the manager of one of the London theatres, and ventured to call upon him.

"You wish to adopt the stage as a profession?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Have you had any experience?"

"Not exactly on the stage; but I've frequently taken part in private theatricals."

"Hum! Well, my dear fellow, unless you've a special gift and unlimited enthusiasm, I strongly advise you to choose some other career. You'll find it slow, laborious, uphill work. You'll probably have to begin at the foot of the ladder, and it may be years before you get a chance of playing a leading character."

I opened my heart to him and explained the situation in which I was placed. He was a kindly enough man, and tried hard to keep a straight face, but I could see he found it well-nigh impossible to take me seriously; and I left him, after half-an-hour's conversation, with a vivid impression that the stage did not present that avenue to wealth which I had previously imagined.

And now I naturally began to feel somewhat discouraged. Here I was at the end of my resources, and the ten thousand pounds as far off as ever; indeed, further off, for those detestable "Egyptians" had already swallowed up a considerable amount of my capital. I had serious thoughts of trying my luck on the race-course, or at the gambling-table, and was only held back by the fear of losing the little money I still possessed. At length, however, a ray of light flashed through the gloom. One morning, as I glanced at the newspaper, the following paragraph caught my eye:

"STRIKING OIL.

"It is reported that a new oil district, known as Stonewall Ridge, has recently been discovered in the neighbourhood of Oil City, Pennsylvania. Great importance is attached to the discovery, and it is believed that the fortunate owners of the new wells are likely to realise immense fortunes."

Eureka! I had found it! My mind was made up in a moment. I would go to Pennsylvania and strike oil. Gathering together almost every shilling I possessed in the world, I booked my passage, and in less than a week was afloat on the Atlantic.

I wrote to Polly and Mr. Gunson telling them of my project. Polly sent me a loving, hopeful letter. Old Gunson added a postscript.

"I have all along considered your plans rash and ill advised, but this latest scheme could only have originated in the brain of a lunatic."

Polly had crossed out the word "lunatic" and written "genius" above it. It cheered me to think that she at least had still faith in me in spite of my previous failures.